

Lifestyle

■ This page designed by Steve Summers

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From page to children's librarian

■ Marcia Sledd worked her way up from a job first offered to one of her daughters.

By DEB SAINÉ

Pharos-Tribune Regional Writer

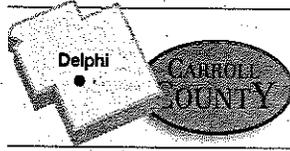
DELPHI — It was a rainy day, so Marcia Grant was scavenging around her Grandmother Agnes's house looking for something to do.

The 10-year-old and her parents, Phil and Manette, were in upstate New York for a family reunion. What the youngster found was a copy of Gene Stratton-Porter's novel, "A Girl of the Limberlost"

"I didn't know she was an Indiana author," Marcia says of the popular writer from Geneva. And even though her grandmother didn't give her granddaughter the book to take back home to Lafayette, Marcia didn't forget about one of the state's most famous female authors.

Stratton-Porter was born near Wabash in 1863, but grew up in Adams County not far from the Ohio state line. She was considered a prime example of an independent woman, an accomplished naturalist, a perfectionist

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and a born story-teller.

But it would be years before Marcia would read the rest of Stratton-Porter's books: "Freckles," "The Harvester" and "Laddie, A True Blue Story." Amy, the oldest of Marcia and Clay Sledd's three children, was a student at Delphi Community High School when she "got hooked" on Stratton-Porter like her mom.

"She'd say, 'Oh, gosh, Mom, you've gotta read this one,'" Marcia says. "And I still like (Stratton-Porter's) books," adding that her favorite is "The Keeper of the Bees."

After graduating from Lafayette Jeff in 1965, Marcia married her high school sweetheart. He was a union carpenter and she was a housewife.

When the kids were 10, 8 and 2, Marcia and Clay decided they needed a change. They packed up Amy, Stacy and Tim, and their belongings, left Tippecanoe County and headed to Kentucky. The couple enrolled at Clear



Pharos-Tribune photo by Deb Sainé

THAT'S MR. ALLOSAURUS FRAGILIS: Delphi Public Library Children's Librarian Marcia Sledd stands next to a permanent visitor in the downstairs department, the reproduction of the skull of an allosaurus fragilis. The dinosaur head was a gift from Mary Hildebrandt Odana's great-nieces and great-nephews. Odana, a Carroll County native, travels around the world visiting archaeological digs and then casting some of the finds into molds like the one at the library.

Creek Baptist College in Pineville, Ky. "We took off and decided to go to school to see where we'd end up," she says. Two years later, deciding the ministry or mission work weren't for them, the Sledds returned to Indiana.

But they wanted to live in a smaller community, so they decided on Delphi. "You get to know people in a small town,"

she says. "And Delphi's just been a good place, a good community, very friendly and open.

"The kids liked it (now 32, 30 and 22), and they got to use their talents more. Whereas at a big school, they may not have had the chance to even try."

For the past 15 years, Marcia has been the children's librarian at Delphi Public Library.

"This is the best library

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around," she says. "It's a great place to work, a great place to bring the kids. And the staff is very willing to help people find things, which is very rare. You don't see that much anymore at other libraries. And I'm proud of that."

Marcia started as a page and worked her way up. The former director, Marti Miller, initially approached Amy about the job. But she already had one that she liked, Marcia says. So, Marcia asked if she could do it instead.

Later, through St. Mary-of-the-Woods' external degree program, Marcia earned a humanities degree from the Terre Haute college.

"Children's books are great," the librarian says. "I love showing kids books and watching them get excited, seeing how books can give teen-agers direc-

tion, help them see others in a new light, and find out about different things."

It's hard for Marcia to pick just one of her favorites from the shelves of the children's department in the basement of the library. "There are just so many good books, and there are so many I like," she says. "There are 50 others, but two of my favorites are "Out of the Dust" by Karen Hesse and "A View from Saturday" by E.L. Konigsburg.

"Out of the Dust" is about a little girl who grew up during the Dust Bowl years. It's written in free verse, and is very moving," Marcia says. As for "A View from Saturday," "Its message is that there is always room for kindness in the world. And I think that's a good message for kids today."

Outside of work, Marcia teaches an adult Sunday school class at First Baptist Church in Lafayette, where she also sings soprano in the Praise Choir.

She has three grandchildren, Mackenzie, 5, Grayson, 4, and Parker, 3 months, and every week the youngest two and their mom, Stacy, drive to Delphi from Lafayette for "Grammy's story hour."

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